

Guide to the Nancy Cunard Collection

GEN MSS 438



by Kathryn Rawdon

May 1999

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 438

CREATOR: Cunard, Nancy, 1896-1965

TITLE: Nancy Cunard collection

DATES: 1930-1965

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.4 linear feet (1 box) + 1 portfolio

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Collection contains correspondence, writings and other materials by or related to Nancy Cunard. Correspondence includes letters from Cunard to Miriam J. Benkovitz (biographer and bibliographer of Ronald Firbank), Jinadasa Vijayatunga, and others, as well as letters to Cunard from John Robertson Scott. Writings include typescript and holograph poems and articles by Cunard, and translations of poems by "Geraldine" and Neftalí Beltrán. Also included is a typescript memoir about Cunard by Iris Tree entitled "We Shall Not Forget."

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.cunard>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.cunard>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Ongoing collection of documents acquired by gift and purchase from various sources. Source information is recorded on the folders. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Portfolio (folders 36-41): Restricted fragile material. Reference surrogates have been substituted in the main files. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

Conditions Governing Use

The Nancy Cunard Collection is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Nancy Cunard Collection. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Processing Information

This finding aid is updated periodically to account for new materials that have been added to the collection. The date of the most recent update is noted on the title page. For information on material that may have been acquired for the collection since the last update, please consult the Public Service Desk.

NANCY CUNARD (1896-1965)

Nancy Cunard was born on 10 March 1896 in Nevill Holt, Leicestershire, England, daughter of Sir Bache Cunard and Lady Maud Alice Burke Cunard. She spent her childhood as part of the British upper class on the family estate, surrounded by her parents' literary and artistic friends. When Cunard was fourteen, she moved with her mother to London, and subsequently attended schools in London, Paris and Germany.

Cunard began writing and publishing poetry in the 1910's, and after World War I she settled in Paris, where she became involved in the Dada, Surrealist and Modernist movements. Her first volume of poetry, *Outlaws*, was published in 1921, followed in 1923 by *Sublunary* and *Parallax* in 1925.

In 1927 Cunard founded the Hours Press in an old farmhouse in La Chapelle-Réanville, Normandy. The Press specialized in publishing writers whose works had difficulty finding a home elsewhere, including Ezra Pound and Samuel Beckett. The Hours Press closed after four years, after which Cunard became intensely involved in the black civil rights movement in the United States. Driven by her interest in the struggle, she spent several years collecting writings by and about African-Americans, which were published in 1934 in the anthology *Negro*.

For most of 1936-1939 Cunard lived in Madrid with the poet Pablo Neruda, working as a freelance writer during the Spanish Civil War. She spent most of World War II in London, where she published the anthology *Poems for France* (1944). After the war, Cunard returned to France to find that the Germans had destroyed or stolen most of her possessions.

Cunard's later publications included *Grand Man: Memories of Norman Douglas* (1954), *GM: Memories of George Moore* (1956) and *These Were the Hours* (1965), a posthumously published memoir. She died in Paris in 1965.

Scope and Contents

This finding aid encompasses accessions of single manuscripts and small groups of manuscripts and other papers, by or pertaining to Nancy Cunard, acquired by the library from a variety of sources. Materials incorporated into the collection prior to May 1999 have been organized into two series. [Series I, *Miriam J. Benkovitz Collection*](#) (1930-1965), contains letters from Cunard to Miriam Benkovitz, biographer and bibliographer of Ronald Firbank, Jinadasa Vijayatunga, and others, one letter from John Robert Scott to Cunard, holograph and typescript poems, articles and translations by Cunard, and a typescript memoir by Iris Tree inscribed to Cunard. [Series II, *Materials from Other Sources*](#) (1919-1948), contains holograph and typescript writings by Cunard.

Collection Contents

Series I: Miriam J. Benkovitz Collection, 1930-1965

0.2 linear feet (1/2 box)

Purchased from Swann Galleries, 1986, on the Albert H. Childs Fund, from the collection of Miriam J. Benkovitz

LETTERS FROM NANCY CUNARD

b. 1, f. 1-10	Benkovitz, Miriam J. Includes: "White Hall Hotels, London Weekly Diary of Social Events," October 19-25, 1958	1954-64, n.d.
b. 1, f. 11	Carroll, John	1956
b. 1, f. 12	[Firbank?], Ronald	n.d.
b. 1, f. 13	Gawsworth, John Removed from: <i>Pensées en Tunisie</i> by John Gawsworth	n.d.
b. 1, f. 14	Heinemann (Firm). Copy of letter	1954 Apr 14
b. 1, f. 15	[Lehmann], John Includes: Copy of a letter from Robert Weinberger to the <i>Guardian</i> (Manchester, England)	[n.y.] Aug 22
b. 1, f. 16	Moult, Thomas	[n.y.] Dec 2
b. 1, f. 17	Patmore, Derek Includes: Two poems by Cunard entitled "The Great Hall" and "Brigit," typescripts, 1964	1965 Feb 13
b. 1, f. 18	[Quennell], Peter	1957 Nov 4
b. 1, f. 19	Scott, John Robertson	[1944?]
b. 1, f. 20	Turner, W. J. (Walter James)	1937 Jun 23
b. 1, f. 21	Vijayatunga, J. (Jinadasa)	1964-65
b. 1, f. 22	Unidentified	1930 Jan 9

LETTERS TO NANCY CUNARD

b. 1, f. 23	Scott, John Robertson	1944
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WRITINGS BY NANCY CUNARD

General Writings

b. 1, f. 24	"Copy of a recent article for England (Travelogue)," typescript article, corrected	n.d.
b. 1, f. 25	"Incarnations," typescript poem	1942
b. 1, f. 26	"Noël, Amour, Guerre 1944," typescript poem	1944-45

WRITINGS BY NANCY CUNARD > General Writings (continued)

b. 1, f. 27	"Thoughts About Ronald Firbank," typescript, corrected	1954 Nov
Translations of Works by Others		
b. 1, f. 28	"Arbres," typescript copy and translation of a poem by "Geraldine"	1949 Jan
b. 1, f. 29	"Soneto en Yucatán," holograph copy and translation of a poem by Neftalí Beltrán	1948[?]
WRITINGS OF OTHERS		
b. 1, f. 30	Tree, Iris. "We Shall Not Forget," typescript memoir, corrected and inscribed to Nancy Cunard	n.d.

Series II: Materials from Other Sources, 1919-1948*0.2 linear feet (1/2 box)*

Acquired by gift or purchase from various sources, as indicated on individual folders

LETTERS FROM NANCY CUNARD

b. 1, f. 31	Tzara, Tristan	[n.y.] Jan 8
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WRITINGS BY NANCY CUNARD

b. 1, f. 32	"Ballad of the Two Wars," typescript poem, corrected. Inscribed to Langston Hughes	1937 Aug
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b. 1, f. 33	"In Answer to a Reproof," holograph poem	1919 Jul
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b. 1, f. 34	"Londres, Été 48," holograph article Includes: Letter on verso of last page from Cunard to Walter [Strachan?], and a typescript English translation	[1948 Jul?]
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b. 1, f. 35	"Three parts from the long epic poem on Spain," typescript, corrected. Inscribed to Langston Hughes	1946 Sep
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Restricted Fragile

Restricted Fragile materials may only be consulted with permission of the appropriate curator. Preservation photocopies for reference use have been substituted in the main files

Restricted fragile material. Reference surrogates have been substituted in the main files. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

b. port, f. 36	Box 1, folder 5
b. port, f. 37	Box 1, folder 8
b. port, f. 38	Box 1, folder 10
b. port, f. 39	Box 1, folder 24
b. port, f. 40	Box 1, folder 28
b. port, f. 41	Box 1, folder 35

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Authors, English -- 20th Century
Poetry, Modern -- 20th Century
Poetry -- Women authors
Poets, English -- 20th Century

Genres / Formats

Poetry

Occupations

Authors
Poets

Names

Beltrán, Nefalí
Benkovitz, Miriam J., 1911-
Cunard, Nancy, 1896-1965
Firbank, Ronald, 1886-1926
Scott, John Robertson
Tree, Iris, 1897-1968
Vijayatunga, J. (Jinadasa), 1902-